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Home Is Where Your Clothes Are

A Comedy in two acts

Anthony Marriott and Bob Grant

Samuel French - London
New York - Toronto - Hollywood



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ISBN 0 573 01789 1

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First presented at the Theatre Royal, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, by David Tudor for Mayville Productions Ltd with the following cast:

Jill Palmer	Carolyn Jones
Major Alan Buxton	Philip Madoc
Postman	Adrian Bull
Philip Clarke	James Aidan
Ronald Chelmsford-Smythe	Richard Ratcliffe
Elizabeth Chelmsford-Smythe	Heather Chasen
Humphrey Bennett QC	Gordon Whiting
Brenda Bennett	Lyndsay Richardson
Jacqueline	Nikki Critcher

Directed by **Kim Grant**
Designed by **Michael Joyce**

CHARACTERS

Jill Palmer
Major Alan Buxton
Philip Clarke
Ronald Chelmsford-Smythe
Elizabeth Chelmsford-Smythe
Humphrey Bennett QC
Brenda Bennett
Jacqueline

The action takes place in the garden flat of a Victorian villa in Lancaster Gate, London

ACT I

SCENE 1 9 o'clock Monday morning
SCENE 2 5 o'clock Monday evening

ACT II The same evening

Time—the present

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(See also page ii)

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ACT I

SCENE 1

The garden flat of a Victorian villa in Lancaster Gate, London. 9 o'clock Monday morning

The flat is comfortable, but not luxurious. DL *is a walk-in wardrobe cupboard. Above it a single divan-bed, on which is a large teddy bear.* UL *is a door leading to the rest of the house. In the corner above it is an electricity meter and mains switch. In the upstage wall is a window, through which can be seen a small brick area, with steps going up to the street.* UC *is the front door to the area. To the right of the door is a small chest with three drawers, and to the right of that a pay-phone on the wall. On the wall* R *is a door, upstage, leading to the bathroom.* DL *is another door to the kitchen. The only other furniture is a small easy chair and a bedside table. There is a small suitcase on the easy chair*

When the CURTAIN *rises, Jill Palmer, late twenties, attractive and smartly dressed for the office, is tidying the bed. She goes to the cupboard and takes out a dress, which she puts in the suitcase. The case has several labels on it, Brussels, Paris, etc.*

She goes into the kitchen and comes back with an empty milk bottle, picks up the case, her handbag and her car keys and goes out of the front door, shutting it behind her

After a moment there is a knock on the door UL. *Major Alan Buxton, fifty, enters. He wears a sports jacket with leather patches on the elbows (which he wears over a cardigan) and cavalry twill trousers. The doorbell upstairs rings. The Major goes out of the front door*

Postman (*off, at the top of the steps*) Morning, Major. Only two recorded deliveries this morning.

The Major goes up the steps

Major Ah, the War Office no doubt.
Postman (*off*) No sir, Inland Revenue and rates summons. I can spot them a mile off.
Major There must be some mistake.
Postman (*off*) Whatever you say Major. Sign here.

The Major comes back, carrying a sheaf of mail, all bills and demands. He quickly looks through them and is appalled. He goes to the kitchen door, knocks on it, and looks in. He repeats the same business at the bathroom door. Satisified that there is no-one in the flat, he opens one of the letters, reads it

and reacts in horror. He quickly goes to the phone and dials a number. After a moment he inserts a ten p piece

Major Hallo? National United Bank? . . . Could I speak to the Manager please? . . . Major Alan Buxton. . . . What? He's expecting a call from me? . . . Thank you. . . . Hallo George, Alan here. Bit shocked by your letter. You didn't mean it did you? . . . You did? . . . Head Office? . . . Did they really? . . . Out of your hands? Oh my God! . . . But that's my whole month's pension. What about next month's? . . . You're going to swallow that up as well? . . . Every month until it's paid off? At that rate I shan't be in credit till next year. What am I going to live on? . . . But how am I going to pay all these bills if I can't cash any cheques? . . . I know that's my problem, George, but I thought you could help me out. You gave me that impression when I took you out to lunch the other day—— What? You're not going to meet that cheque either? . . . But you said how much you enjoyed your oysters—and the Dom Perignon—and the Châteaubriand. . . . Yes I know a man in my position shouldn't be buying expensive lunches, but you accepted my invitation. . . . I've told you before, I haven't got any security, she took practically all the furniture and it's her house and she won't sell it. And she expects me to pay all the bills and rent on top . . . I have let the basement flat, as you suggested. . . . Yes, and roughing it upstairs in a sleeping bag. . . . I am trying to get a job, I've been trying for eighteen months, but there's not a lot of demand for a chap like me—retired regular—ex-infantry major—no qualifications and a Victoria Cross. . . . Blast, I haven't got another ten p. . . . George . . . Mr Perkins . . . Sir . . . please . . . (*The phone goes dead and he replaces the receiver*) Oh my God.

He looks at his watch, realizes that he has very little time and crosses to the bed, picks up the large teddy bear and throws it out of the door UL. *He then goes to the wardrobe, grabs all the dresses, shuts the wardrobe door and goes off* UL

Jill returns down the area steps with a bottle of milk. She goes into the kitchen, putting the car keys on the chair as she goes

The Major enters carrying a man's clothes, all on hangers, and puts them in the wardrobe. He goes to the chest of drawers and pulls one drawer open

Jill comes in from the kitchen

Jill Oh, Major!

The Major shuts the drawer quickly

Major Ah, Miss Palmer. I thought you'd gone.
Jill What are you doing in my flat?
Major I just popped down to use your phone.
Jill But you've got your own phone upstairs, in the house.
Major It's cut off . . . cut out . . . out of order. (*He quickly scrabbles up the bills from the chest and stuffs them in his pocket*)
Jill What are you doing with my furniture?

Major Er, it's the drawer. It sticks. I've been meaning to fix it.
Jill But there's nothing wrong with it.
Major Ah, that's right. I must have fixed it. I remember now, I did it a couple of weeks ago, before you moved in. Won't you miss your plane?
Jill No, I'm getting a later one.
Major Later? How much later?
Jill The ten-thirty. I've got plenty of time.
Major Are you going to do this every Monday morning?
Jill Do what?
Major Get the later plane?
Jill Does it matter?
Major No, no, of course not.
Jill Blast! I've forgotten to pack my evening bag. Where did I put it? Ah yes, the wardrobe.
Major The wardrobe. No! I mean, I'm sure you didn't.
Jill How would you know?
Major I wouldn't. I mean I wouldn't think I would, would you?

The kettle whistles in the kitchen

Your kettle's whistling.
Jill (*slightly puzzled*) Yes, it's a whistling kettle.

She goes into the kitchen

As soon as she has gone, the Major quickly whips the man's clothes out of the wardrobe and rushes out UL

Jill enters

Would you like a cup of . . . oh, he's gone.

She goes back to the kitchen

The Major enters carrying Jill's clothes, which he hastily returns to the wardrobe and closes the door. He then quickly gets the teddy bear from UL *and comes back as . . .*

Jill enters with a mug of coffee

The Major hastily hides the teddy behind his back

Oh, I thought you'd gone.

She turns away and puts her coffee cup down. He drops the teddy on the bed

Major Yes I had. I went upstairs . . . and then I came down again.
Jill Coffee?
Major No, clothes.
Jill Clothes?
Major And coffee. I spilt some coffee on my clothes. (*He brushes his sleeve, and sees the time on his watch*) Good God look at the time. I must get moving.
Jill Well don't let me keep you.

Major I'm not going anywhere. It's you. I mean you mustn't miss your plane. They need you in Brussels.
Jill Not really, I'm only a secretary.
Major But you're French-speaking. Mustn't keep the Frogs waiting.
Jill I'm sure the Common Market can survive for a few hours without me. My boss has got me till the end of the week.
Major Which day are you coming back?
Jill Friday evening, as usual.
Major That's all right then.
Jill If I had my way I wouldn't be going at all.
Major What?
Jill I hate Brussels. All my friends are in London. I've half a mind to chuck the job.
Major (*thoroughly alarmed*) Chuck it? You can't do that. It would ruin me. I mean it would ruin you. Think of all those people out of work. They're unemployed you know. Like me.
Jill It's different for you, you don't *have* to work.
Major Don't I? No I don't, do I.
Jill It must be nice to have a private income on top of your army pension.
Major Yes it must. I mean it is.
Jill Well I suppose I'd better be going.
Major Don't forget your case.
Jill It's in the car.
Major Oh, just one thing. The rent.
Jill What about it?
Major I wonder if I could trouble you for it?
Jill But it's not due for a fortnight.
Major Yes. I meant could I trouble you for it—in a fortnight.
Jill Well, yes, of course.
Major Good! I'll leave you to it.

He goes out UL

Jill (*as she goes*) Bye, see you Friday.

She shuts the door UL *and drops the latch on the Yale lock. She then goes out of the front door, closes it behind her, and goes up the area steps*

We hear a key going into the lock of the UL *door. The door opens and the Major appears holding a key. He dashes to the chest of drawers and opens a drawer*

Jill runs back down the steps and into the room

Forgot my evening bag.

She goes to the wardrobe and collects her evening bag

The Major slams the drawer on his hand

Major Ahh!! (*He hops around waving it*)
Jill Pardon?

Major Ah . . . you're back. I was just coming out to tell you, you didn't shut the door properly.
Jill I thought I did.
Major No, it's a very tricky lock. I must fix it. After all you want your privacy don't you. See you Friday. (*He starts to go*)
Jill That's funny. Teddy's moved.
Major He can't have done.
Jill I always sit him up on the pillow. It's nice and comfy for him.
Major I'll remember that. I mean I remember that.

She puts her evening bag on the bed and arranges Teddy in his place. The Major looks out of the window from time to time, and is rather agitated throughout the following conversation

Jill I meant to ask you—chest of drawers.
Major Chest of drawers?
Jill Could I have the other one back?
Major What other one?
Jill The matching one to that one. (*She indicates the chest*) The one you took away to have repaired last week.
Major That one. Er . . . It fell apart.
Jill Fell apart? It was brand new.
Major Shoddy workmanship and full of woodworm.
Jill Just as well you got rid of it.
Major Exactly. (*He starts to go again*)
Jill But I do need another. I'm very short of drawer space.
Major You are? Of course you are.
Jill I'm sure you've got something upstairs I could have. Anything will do.
Major Anything? That's just it, I haven't got anything. Ex-wife left me very short of furniture.
Jill How awkward for you. Couldn't you stop her?
Major Not really. It was her furniture.
Jill She can't do that.
Major But she did. I didn't want to make a fuss at eight o'clock in the morning with the pantechnicon outside. Embarrassing enough as it was.
Jill At least she left you the house.
Major (*little chuckle*) Couldn't very well get that into the van.
Jill But you can't live with hardly any furniture.
Major Haven't got much option.
Jill Couldn't you order some more?
Major Yes, I could if I could find the . . . (*He stops in mid-sentence*)
Jill Find the what?
Major Find the sort of furniture I like.
Jill What sort do you like?
Major The sort my wife took away. It was antique. Worth a small fortune.
Jill That's why she took it.
Major Yes, I suppose it was.
Jill I didn't take a thing when I left my ex. I just packed a suitcase and left him with the flat, the furniture and the little Maltese "scrubber" I found

him in bed with.

Major How very unpleasant for you. I know exactly how you feel—not that my adjutant was Maltese of course.

Jill You caught your wife in bed with the adjutant?

Major Good heavens no. It wasn't like that at all. I was the last to know.

Jill How did you find out?

Major She told me—the day I retired. We were watching *Panorama* at the time. She blurted it out. "You're leaving the Army and I'm leaving you." The pantechnicon was here in the morning.

Jill Didn't waste much time, did they?

Major No, they had it all planned. I'll say that for him, he was a damned good organizer. Best adjutant I ever had. There was nothing he couldn't turn his hand to.

Jill Including your wife it seems.

The Major looks at his watch, and once again out of the window

Are you expecting somebody?

Major Matter of fact I am. (*He doesn't move*)

Jill Don't let me keep you.

Major Don't let me keep you either.

Jill I ought to be going.

Major Off you go then.

Jill I will when you've gone.

Major Gone?

Jill Upstairs. To meet whoever it is you're going to meet.

Major Of course I've got to meet them upstairs haven't I. Have a nice trip—see you on Friday. It won't be *before* Friday evening will it?

Jill (*puzzled*) Course not. Never is, is it?

Major (*relieved*) Good.

Jill Good?

Major Good . . . goodbye.

He goes out UL. *Still puzzled, Jill shuts the door behind him and puts the Yale catch on, locking it. She then goes out of the front door, making sure that it is properly shut, and goes off up the area steps. We hear the car door slam and the car engine start*

The Major starts to rattle the UL *door violently. He cannot open it*

Major (*off*) Blast!

Jill comes running down the area steps, in through the front door, grabs her evening bag from the bed

The phone rings. She answers it

Jill Hallo? . . . Yes, speaking. . . . Oh I am sorry. . . . That is kind of you. It'll be lovely to have the week off. I do hope you get better soon, M'sieur Laugenie. Au'voir. (*She dials a number. Then puts a coin in the box*) Hallo, Paul? . . . Yes it's me, Jill. Can I take you up on your invitation? . . . Yes, I've got the week off. My boss has been taken ill. . . . Yes I should be able

to make Highgate by half-past ten. I've just got a bit of shopping to do first and get changed. . . . Course I know the way. See you.

She puts the receiver down and goes out of the front door. We hear her drive off

Immediately the Major runs down the area steps, carrying two large plastic dustbin bags, one pink and one blue. He produces a door key and lets himself in. He takes out of the blue bag a pair of boxing gloves. He takes off the chest of drawers a can of hair lacquer and one or two toiletries, which he puts into the pink bag. He leaves the bags on the floor and goes to the cupboard, takes out the clothes and goes out UL

He returns immediately with a duvet, pillow and pair of men's pyjamas. He takes Teddy off the bed and plonks him in a chair. He then strips the pretty flowered duvet and matching pillow off the bed and the neatly folded night-dress, which he puts inside the zippered Teddy. He substitutes the striped duvet and matching pillow and pyjamas. He takes the rejected bedding out UL *and returns with three chest-drawers piled one on top of the other. He takes the three drawers out of the chest and substitutes the three he has just brought in. He goes out* UL *with the other drawers and returns with the man's clothes, which he hangs in the cupboard*

We hear a high-powered motor bike approaching

The Major reacts and hurriedly picks up both plastic bags and races into the bathroom. We hear him opening cupboards, etc. He reappears

The motor bike stops outside

The Major frantically dashes into the kitchen. Again we hear banging and crashing. He comes rushing out, still carrying both bags

At that moment Philip Clarke comes down the area steps. He is in his late twenties and a keen athlete. He is dressed in motor-cycling gear, crash helmet, etc. He lets himself in with a key

The Major suddenly notices Teddy in the chair, and picks him up and puts him on the bed as Philip, carrying a small valise, enters

Philip Morning, Major. What are you doing in my flat?

Major Ah, Mr Clarke. Just giving your flat a quick clean-up.

Philip That's very nice of you, but you needn't have bothered. I didn't leave it untidy when I left on Friday, did I?

Major No, no, spotless as usual. Everything's in order. Clothes wardrobe. Shirts in the drawers, Teddy on the bed. Oh!

Philip What's that doing there? That's not mine.

Major No . . . it's mine.

Philip Yours?

Major Yes.

Philip What are you doing with a teddy bear? Bit old for that kind of thing, aren't you?

Major Oh far too old. Gave up teddies years ago.

Philip Where did it come from?

Major Er . . . I won it. The Conservative Club raffle. I was just wondering what to do with it. I . . . er . . . I'll give it away to somebody.

Philip If you're giving it away, my fiancée would love it. Brenda loves toys. Very kind of you.

Major (*weakly*) Don't mention it.

Philip (*about to take the teddy*) Can you just put it on the bed? My hands are covered in grease. Wretched bike broke down on the motorway. Belting down with rain. Got water on my plugs. And got soaked myself. I'd better have a shower and change before I go to chambers. The head man's a bit of a Tartar.

Major Yes. I've cleared the bathroom.

Philip How do you mean cleared it?

Major The drains. Had a bit of trouble with them over the weekend. But they're all right now.

Philip Good. (*He starts to take off his leathers. He wears a black jacket and pinstripe trousers underneath*)

Major Did you have a nice weekend?

Philip Very successful. I had a splendid fight.

Major Good gracious me. Do you like fighting?

Philip Naturally I do. I'm a keen amateur boxer.

Major Of course, the boxing gloves. I should have realized when I moved them.

Philip You moved them?

Major Yes, I picked them up, to look at them because . . . I'm interested in boxing too.

Philip Really?

Major Did a lot of it in the army. Called me Battling Buxton.

Philip We must have a sparring session sometime. (*He shapes up and shadow boxes*)

Major (*backing away*) I'm very rusty. It was years ago.

Philip Don't worry, I won't hit you too hard. Tell you what, there's a Tournament on at the Albert Hall next Friday evening. I've got a couple of tickets. Would you like to come?

Major Friday? Oh no, Friday evening is my busy evening. I have to change over the flat.

Philip Change over the flat.

Major Change over the bedding.

Philip Don't worry about that. I'll do it. Just give me the clean bedding and I'll do it myself.

Major Good gracious. You're not staying Friday night are you?

Philip That depends. If you're not coming I'll persuade Brenda to come with me, and then I might as well stay here for the night.

Major Don't persuade her. I'll come.

Philip Good. To be quite honest, Brenda's not all that keen—in fact she hates it, in spite of the fact that that's how we met.

Major She boxes too?

Philip Goodness, no. It was the Midlands Barristers Boxing Club finals.

Her father presented me with the cup. He's the head of my chambers you know. I was area champion last year.

Major Congratulations.

Philip Thank you. Brenda was there with her father. I was knocked out.

Major I thought you won.

Philip I did. I mean I was knocked out by Brenda, and now we're engaged.

Major Congratulations again. Pretty good ring-craft, if I may say so, marrying the boss's daughter.

Philip I'm not doing it for that reason. I love her.

Major Course you do, now. I loved Elizabeth—my ex-wife—when I met her. She was the boss's daughter too. Her father was my general. It didn't do me much good. I finished up as a retired major and my wife ran off with the adjutant.

Philip I'm sorry.

Major So am I. He was my best friend.

Philip Why didn't you thump him?

Major Couldn't do that—he was my brother officer. Not done.

Philip Nor is stealing another officer's wife.

Major Oh that's done quite a lot. Mind you, Elizabeth's been very decent about the whole thing. She's let me stay on in the house. It's all hers you know, left her by the general when he had his accident.

Philip What happened to him?

Major He was eaten by a crocodile.

Philip In Africa?

Major No, in London Zoo. He'd had too much brandy. Crocodile was drunk for a week.

Philip What a terrible story.

Major Yes, but I mustn't worry you with my problems, you've got your living to earn.

Philip I've only got a couple of briefs to read today. Attempted murder and multiple rape. Pretty boring. Still mustn't grumble. I'm very lucky to have got into such good chambers.

Major But you still like to go home for weekends, don't you?

Philip Yes I do, but I think it's going to have to stop—because Brenda doesn't like it.

Major You mustn't let it stop—I mean you mustn't let her stop you.

Philip She *is* my fiancée, and her father is my head of chambers.

Major You won't like London at the weekends—it's a terrible place, very noisy. It's full of people from abroad.

Philip But I'll have Brenda.

Major Not here you won't. I mean she wouldn't like it here. I'm sure she's used to better things. She wouldn't like a nasty little flat like this.

Philip We'll soon find out. She's coming over tonight to cook my supper.

Major I shall have to tell her about the fungus and the damp, the mice and rats and the cockroaches.

Philip You didn't tell *me* about them.

Major No. They only come out at the weekends, because there's nobody here and it's so quiet.

Philip But I thought you said it was noisy at the weekends.
Major It is. From the rats, the mice and the cockroaches clumping about.
Philip In that case, I think you've got a nerve.
Major A nerve?
Philip Yes, for charging me so much rent. The place is infested.
Major Only at the weekends—and you're not here then are you?
Philip I might be. I'll have to give it plenty of thought.
Major That's right, give it plenty of thought—endless thought. You don't want to do anything I'll . . . I mean you'll regret.
Philip I'll tell you one thing I'm regretting.
Major What's that?
Philip Paying you so much rent for a vermin-infested flat. You'd better get somebody in at the weekend.
Major I've already got somebody in—that's the trouble. I mean I've got somebody coming in to see to the trouble. But it's going to cost a lot of money and I haven't got a lot of money, so could I have the rent?
Philip But I paid you a month's rent in advance last week when I moved in.
Major Yes I know, but I mean *next* month's rent.
Philip You can't have that now, it's not due for three weeks. Anyway I haven't got it till the next lot of fees. And if I don't get to work soon I won't even have them. I'll lose the few briefs I've got. (*He goes towards the bathroom*)
Major Yes, well I mustn't keep you. (*He goes towards the door* UL)
Philip (*indicating the plastic bags*) Don't forget the rubbish.
Major That's not rubbish, that's her . . . her . . . herbaceous plants for the garden. I must put them upstairs. (*He picks up the bags*)
Philip I should put them in the garden.
Major What a good idea.

He goes UL

Philip takes off his jacket and chucks it on the bed. He goes into the bathroom, switches on the light and shuts the door

We hear a motor car approach and stop outside

The Major rushes in UL, *looks off out of the window. His worst fears confirmed, he hastily shoves the motor-bike leathers under the bed, takes Philip's jacket off the chair and throws it into the kitchen. Stuffs the boxing gloves into one of the drawers and picks up the motor-cycle helmet as . . .*

Jill lets herself in from the outside. She carries a plastic bag of groceries and her handbag

Jill (*surprised*) Major! What are you doing here?
Major It was an emergency. I had to come down.
Jill Emergency? I don't understand. Why're you here?
Major Why're I here? Why're . . . wire . . . there's trouble with the wiring.
Jill What wiring?
Major Electrical wiring, what else.
Jill What's the matter with it?

Major It's overloading.
Jill That's terrible—it could start a fire.
Major Could it? Yes it could, that's why I've come down. And that's why you must get out. In case there is a fire. Could be one any second.
Jill There's no time to lose.

The Major rushes to the front door and holds it open for her. She follows him, but instead of going out of the door, she switches off the main electricity switch, which is on the wall by the door

Major What are you doing?
Jill It's all right now, I've switched it off, at the mains. Your wiring can't overload now.
Philip (*off, from the bathroom*) Oi! What's going on?
Jill There's a man in my bathroom.
Major So there is.

He rushes to the bathroom door, which has started to open. He pulls it shut

Stay where you are. Don't come out.
Philip (*off*) The bloody light's gone off.
Major The bloody light's gone off.
Jill Of course it has. I switched it off.
Major Of course it has. She switched it off.
Jill What are you doing in my bathroom?
Philip (*off*) I can't see to shower.
Jill What do you mean you can't see to shower?
Major No he means he can't see *to* the shower, which he's seeing to because he's the plumber.
Jill I thought you said it was the wiring?
Major It is.
Jill Then why have you got a plumber?
Major That's just it. The water's got into the wiring. So I've got the plumber in to get the water out. When the water's out I'll get the plumber out and the electrician in to get the wiring out.
Jill That makes sense.
Major Does it? Thank goodness.
Philip (*off*) When are you going to put the light on? I can't see what I'm doing.
Jill You'd better open the door to give him some light—he can't see what he's doing.
Major Yes. (*He starts to open the door, then quickly slams it again*) I can't do that. He hasn't got any clothes on.
Jill Hasn't got any clothes on? What sort of a plumber is he?
Major A naked one, but he's a very neat worker. There's so much water in there he took his clothes off. He didn't want to get them wet.
Philip (*off*) What the hell's going on?
Jill You'd better let me have a word with him.
Major No you can't. He's very shy and very nude. (*To Philip*) Hang on, I'll be with you in a minute. (*To Jill*) You go into the kitchen and I'll get him dressed.

Jill Where are his clothes? I can't see them.
Major No they're under the bed.
Jill Under the bed?
Major Yes I told him not to litter the place. He's very untidy.
Jill But you said he was a very neat worker.
Major Yes, he's a very neat worker, but a very untidy undresser. So you go in there and wait till I call you.
Jill Oh, very well, but don't be long.

She goes into the kitchen

Major Don't worry. I'll have him dressed in a flash. (*He closes the kitchen door behind her*)

Philip, with a bath towel round his waist, comes out of the bathroom

Philip What's going on and what are you doing in my flat?
Major It's an emergency. It's the wiring and the water. There's water in the wiring, but don't worry, I've had the electrician in and he's fixed it. He's a very good man. I'll put the electricity back on. (*He goes to the main electricity switch and switches it on*)
Jill (*off*) Is he dressed yet?
Philip There's a girl in my kitchen.
Major So there is.
Philip What's she doing there and who is she?
Major She's . . . the electrician.
Philip You said the electrician was a man.
Major Yes he is, but she's . . . the electrician's mate. His wife. She checks up on him, he's very sloppy.
Philip I thought you said he was a very *good* man?
Major Oh he is, he's a very good *man*, but a very sloppy *worker*.
Jill (*off*) Hurry up, I want to speak to the plumber.
Philip What plumber?
Major She means you . . . you don't know what she means. She means Mr Plummer, the electrician, that's his name. And she's Mrs Plummer. (*He calls off to the kitchen*) Won't be a minute Miss Palmer.
Philip Why are you calling her Miss Palmer?
Major Because that's her name, her maiden name, before she married Mr Plummer and became Mrs Plummer.
Jill (*off*) Hurry up, I haven't got all day.
Philip You'd better let me have a word with her. (*He goes towards the kitchen door*)
Major No, you can't do that, you haven't got any clothes on. She mustn't see you like that.
Philip I'm perfectly decent, I'm sure she won't mind.
Major No, *she* won't mind, but her husband will. He's insanely jealous. He gets very violent.
Philip (*shaping up*) Don't worry. I can handle myself.
Major No, you mustn't hit him, he's . . . he's not well, he's got a weak heart.

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